

General) and his companions, Major MacLaren and Sergeants Goldfinch and Francis, took ten days to make the trip, which lay across France, Italy, Crete, the Mediterranean and the north coast of Africa. They made numerous stops for refuelling, but on the whole the flight was uneventful, and the Handley Page O/400 and its two Rolls-Royce Eagle engines (of 375 h.p. each) behaved quite well, nursed at each stop by the two sergeants.

Nowadays, aircraft of B.O.A.C. and its associates fly the route between Great Britain and Egypt some six times a day in each direction, and next year A. V-M Borton will be able to fly three times as fast over the route which he pioneered thirty years ago, but in another Handley Page, the Hermes, scheduled for delivery at the rate of four per month, beginning next January. Should he elect to do so, he will doubtless compare the discomfort of the old O/400 with the pressurized and air-conditioned Hermes flying at 25,000ft. Not that we should like to convey the idea that A. V-M Borton has not flown since 1918. When he retired from the R.A.F. he became a director of Napier's (whose Naiad we describe in this issue) and took part in King's Cup air races, as well as doing a good deal of less strenuous flying. But on a flight such as that which we have hypothesized, A. V-M Borton's thoughts would be likely to turn back to the cold comfort of the open cockpit and the flapping fuselage fabric of the O/400.

Another Mysterious Disappearance

THERE now appears to be little hope that the Latécoère flying boat which vanished on a flight across the South Atlantic can still be afloat, and once again the aviation world, it is to be feared, is left to mourn the loss of many lives in mysterious circumstances.

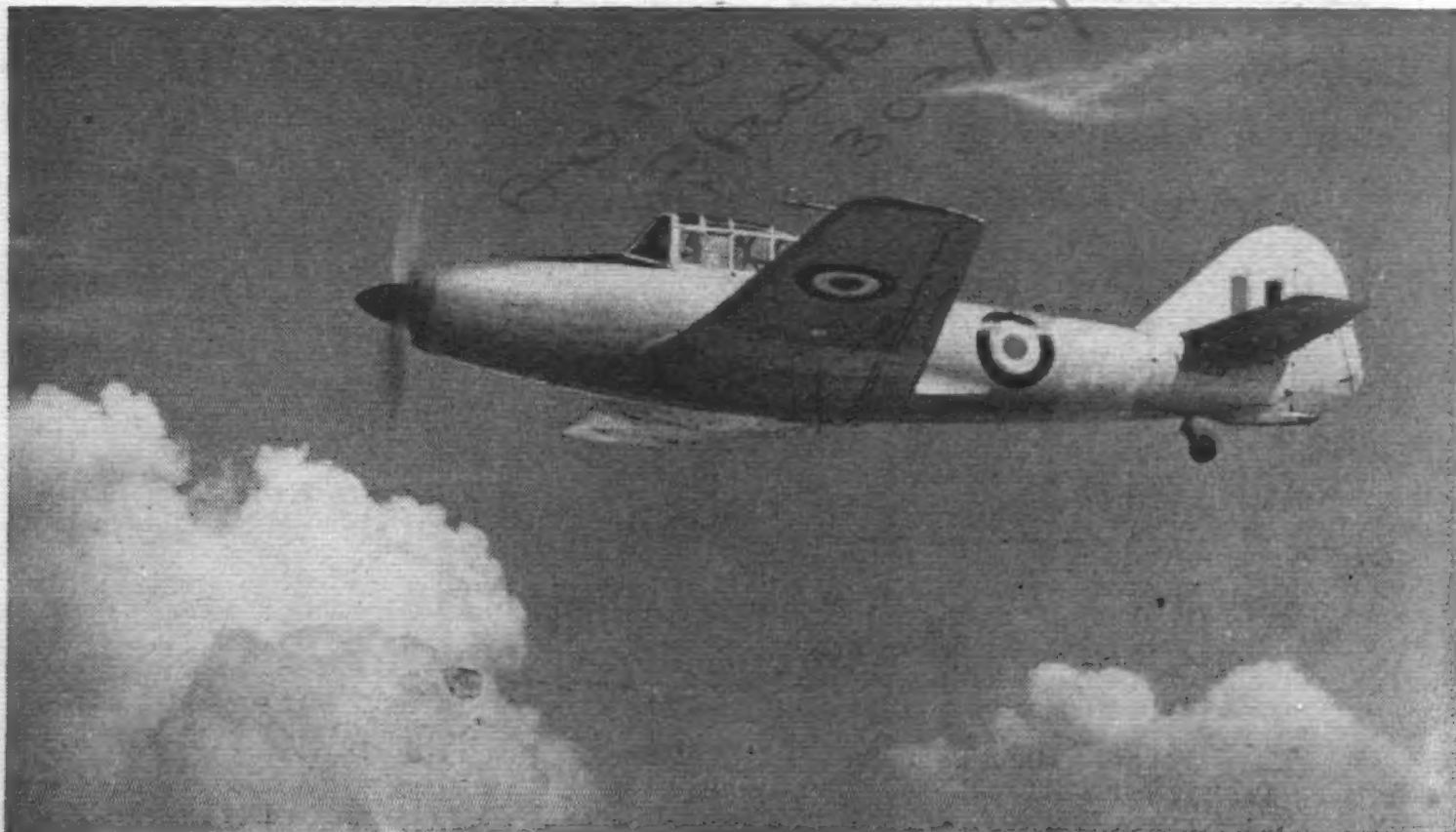
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The fact that the aircraft involved was a flying boat, and a large one at that, gave good cause for hoping that it might have made a safe descent, and that thus the passengers and crew might be rescued. In a fairly recent case a Boeing flying boat came down in the North Atlantic in a very rough sea, but in spite of this all the occupants were taken off safely. Reports indicated that the weather was fairly good in the South Atlantic at the time when the Latécoère, still flying, sent out its message to report all well.

There is some difficulty in reconciling the reports of faint distress signals received days later with still more recent reports of finding wreckage believed to have been from the flying boat, and said to have shown traces of fire. Several explanations are possible, and it may be that fire broke out while the boat was still airborne, that the pilot managed to alight, that the fire was got under control but that parts of the radio equipment was put out of action, thus preventing the sending of the distress signals until a later time. This, of course, is conjecture but appears to fit in with the known facts.



SCION OF THE "504": It is now nearly 35 years since the Avro 504 biplane was supplied to the Royal Flying Corps. After being used successfully as an operational type it was selected by Colonel Smith-Barry as the standard instructional aircraft of that Service, and later of the R.A.F. The Avro Athena T.1, seen above on an early test flight, embodies all the experience accumulated by Avro with 504s of various marks, and with the later Tutor and Type 626. High performance in the Athena has not been obtained at the expense of field of view and ease of maintenance.